

Individual Write-up #3 – Lizette Romano

- 1. Question: What CBPR principles would you apply to assess the needs, assets, and capacities of communities within the BEST trial? Describe at least 3 principles and provide an example of how you would apply each one**

The CBPR principles I would apply to assess the needs, assets, and capacities of communities in BEST would be to facilitate equitable relationships, recognize the community's identity, and build on the assets of the community. Facilitating equitable relationships would help the community feel included in the research conversations. Recognizing the community's identity would help prevent miscommunications and provide opportunities to manage conflicts. Building on the assets of the community would allow for capacity building in the long-term scope of the project within the community.

I would facilitate equitable relationships by involving community members to be part of the needs assessment process. I would host community meetings where members could share concerns about the needs that were identified initially as well as share what they feel their needs are. If there were discrepancies between community needs and the needs of the research, then I would work with a team of community members and leaders to identify if the research would be beneficial for the community.

I would recognize the community's identity by checking my own biases about the community and what the research would be accomplishing in the community. I would recognize that each community has different customs and capacities within them that. Knowing each community's identity could ensure that research processes like how consent forms are interpreted or what kind of samples are required for the research could

be adjusted. It would be important to identify any other issues communities face to better understand how being a part of the research would affect them.

Lastly, I would build on the assets of the community by allowing community members to become the researchers for their own communities. This would allow the community to take control of the research and understand why the research is important. It would also likely lead to longer term sustained efforts since the community would have the tools to continue doing research beyond the project timeline for BEST.

2. Question: Choose one of the groups/organizations listed for presentation assignments other than the one assigned to you. If you were not assigned to present for this case, choose any role. How might your objectives and recommendations for the BEST trial differ?

The objective of the Columbia researchers was to study the Bangladesh problem since it could be applied to arsenic problems in the U.S. The team hoped to gain knowledge of long-term arsenic exposure and what treatments would work best. Researchers recommended starting the project as quick as possible and having a team of people they felt were trustworthy. Another recommendation they had was to provide free filters to people who were part of the study as an incentive and to reduce future exposure. Researchers thought it would be important to find couples for their study since couples would have differences in male or female hormones. Researchers also noted the possibility of continuing research in couple's off-spring to see any in-utero long-term effects of arsenic exposure.

3. Question: Ethical research standards for research and protection of human subjects, defined in the WHO Guidelines and The Belmont Report, may not address all the challenges of studying human subjects in geographically remote areas and across cultural divides. Briefly discuss how researchers can balance the requirements of their research with their interest in improving conditions by reducing exposure (i.e., mitigating the conditions they are studying)?

Conditions could be improved while also balancing research requirements by using the CBPR principle where we balance research and action. One example is having an intervention that is informed by local organizations and settings instead of the U.S. deciding what interventions would be applied. If there was already an intervention being used in Bangladesh that seemed to be effective, researchers could have used the opportunity of local's knowledge since locals had been dealing with effects longer than any of the researchers. This includes the CBPR principle of learning in both directions as the community also had their own knowledge of the problems.

Other principles that could help improve conditions and still balance research needs would be focusing on long-term efforts. The researchers focused on the project timeline instead of finding ways that people could be helped even after the research was completed. People would have likely felt that their best interests were being considered if the researchers had some long-term solutions for them and their families. Instead, it seemed the researchers only expected to be there for the length of the project. More people might have participated if they felt that participating would create a change in their futures.

4. Question: What ethical and cultural challenges would be most important to consider when conducting community-based research as an “outsider”? How might you address some of those challenges? Describe and provide potential solutions for at least three challenges.

One important ethical challenge that would be important to consider when conducting research as an outsider is a lack of buy-in from the community. When there is a lack of buy-in, participants may feel forced to join due to the incentives being given or they might feel like they need to participate to get help with their problems in the future. The solution to this challenge is to involve the community in all steps of the research processes. Asking the community to describe their needs and adjusting the project wherever possible to fill the community's needs could help foster buy-in.

Two cultural challenges that should be considered when conducting research as an outsider are: historical tensions between institutions or countries and the place the research is being conducted, as well as power dynamics that may exist culturally such as males being seen as dominant figures. Historical tensions should be addressed by building trust, acknowledging wrongdoing of the researchers' institution or country, and allowing community members to be part of the research team. Power dynamics that may be present due to cultural differences should be addressed by having community liaisons and researchers who are from the community and identity groups when possible. Researchers should discuss their role and that they are not above the participants.